

UNIVERSITY OF ABERDEEN

SENATUS ACADEMICUS

Minutes of the meeting held on 4 May 2016

Present: Principal, Professors Kilburn, Paterson, McGeorge, Hannaford, MacGregor and Ross, Ms AM Slater, Professors Morrison, Welch, Coyle, Heys, Skakle, Jolley and Guz, Dr A Arnason, Professors Davies, Wells, Brown and Campbell, Connolly, Masthoff and Shennan, Dr M Ehrenschtner, Mrs D Bruxvoort, Mrs L Tibbetts, Dr J Lamb, Professors McCausland and Hutchison, Professor Friedrich, Dr H Pierce, Dr P Ziegler, Dr Y Bain, Dr E Curtis, Mrs M Stephen, Dr G Sharman, Dr A Lewis, Professor Duff, Dr A Simpson, Mr S Styles, Dr M Mills, Dr L Bennie, Dr T Argounova-Low, Professor Anderson, Dr J Sternberg, Professor Pinard, Dr J Barrow, Dr A Rajnicek, Dr M Delibegović, Dr N Mody, Dr C Black, Professor Barker, Dr S Fielding, Dr N Hoggard, Dr B Timermans, Professor Akisanya, Professor Kashtalyan, Dr J Oliver, Dr A Ebinghaus, Dr C North, Dr N Oren, Professor Coghill, Dr M da Silva Baptista, Dr B Martin, Dr W Vasonselos, Miss G Clarke, Mr L Fuller, and Mr D Rennie

Apologies: Professors Glover, Haites, Gimlin, Mr M Whittington, Professors Baggs and Sahraie, Dr R Neilson, Professor Naphy, Dr S Lawrie, Professor Lurie, Dr M Beaton, Dr P Bishop, Dr A Sim, Ms S Cornelius, Dr K Groo, Professors Mealar, Dr Z Yihdego, Dr D Lusseau, Dr J Baird, Mrs C Dennis, Professor Johnson, Professor Teismann, Dr S Tucker, Dr A Jenkinson, Dr D Scott, Professor Ibbetson, Dr D MacCallum, Dr K Khalaf, Dr M Cruickshank, Dr L Aucott, Dr R MacKenzie, Dr A Venkatesh, Dr I Cameron, Dr K Foster, Professor Lee, Dr F Thies, Dr L Williams, Dr D Ray, Dr K Pilz, Dr O Menshykov, Professor MacDonald, Dr R Macpherson, Professor Brittain, Miss Z Howell, Miss A Pavelekova, Mr J Waddell, Miss K Hood, Miss A Sevadjan, Miss D Passinke, Mr D Kaminek, Miss A Sharp, Mr C Herbert, Miss A Hay, Miss C Henssen, Mr I Tashim, Mr F Neldelea, Mr F Archibald, Miss C Christie, Mr C Coyle and Miss S Small

APPROVAL OF AGENDA

- 36.1 The Principal opened the meeting by inviting Senators to confirm whether they were content to approve the agenda. Senators approved the agenda.

APPROVAL OF MINUTES

- 37.1 The Senate was invited to approve the minutes of the meetings held on 3 February and 9 March 2016. The following issues were raised with regards to their accuracy:

- (i) Dr Mackintosh noted an issue raised by Dr Sim in advance of the meeting regarding the accuracy of the minute of the meeting of 3 February. She advised that Dr Sim had advised that in regard to the final bullet under minute 21.9 that the matter noted was raised by himself and not by Dr Simpson as stated. Dr Simpson confirmed his contentment with that amendment. Dr Mackintosh further informed Senate that Dr Sim had also advised that his understanding was that the matter of recording proceedings at sub-committees (in addition to Senate) would be brought back to the next meeting of Senate for discussion and not simply that it would be taken away for further investigation as detailed in the minutes. Dr Mackintosh advised that the minute accorded with the notes

taken of the meeting. She further advised that the Director of IT Services had advised that due to the variety of rooms used, recording meetings of this nature in a way that effectively enables all members' contributions to be recorded would require financial investment in terms of IT infrastructure and a marked increase in the staff time needed for setup, recording and decommissioning. The Principal invited Senate to confirm that the explanation provided was sufficient. No questions were raised by members. The Principal further reminded Senators that the meeting was being recorded.

- (ii) Professor David Anderson raised a point regarding the accuracy of section 23.2 of the minute of the March meeting regarding Academic Line Management and specifically the University Secretary's confirmation that whilst Senators may express a view on staffing-related matters, responsibility for management of staff falls to the University Court. Professor Anderson stated that his recollection of the debate was that a number of Senators had disagreed with that view and had felt that Senate did have remit to express a view and take votes on academic line management. He further noted that this was the first part of the motion passed by Senate in March. He proposed that this section of the minute was therefore inaccurate. The Principal invited the University Secretary to respond. She invited Professor Anderson to suggest alternative wording. He proposed the addition of a statement to record that several Senators disagreed.
- (iii) Professor David Anderson raised a further point regarding section 23.7 of the minute of the March meeting. He noted that the motion had three parts and that Senators had voted on all three parts not just on one motion to bring back a paper as stated in the minute. The Principal responded to say that the recording would be checked and that a revised minute would be circulated if Professor Anderson's recollection was found to be correct.
- (iv) Dr Jeff Oliver raised a point regarding section 17.2 of the March minute that two of the three motions presented related to issues outwith the remit of Senate. He noted this point to be similar to that raised by Professor Anderson regarding 23.2 above. He queried whether this was an interpretation of the policy rather than the policy itself. The Secretary commented that while Senate could express a view on such matters, the Court, as the employer, is the body entitled to make decisions regarding such matters. The Secretary added that Senate was of course entitled to express an opinion and vote to give a measure of Senate's view but that Court was the decision-making body in such matters. The Principal noted that the minute would be amended to reflect this clarification.

37.4 The Principal invited Senators to confirm that they were content with the minutes of 3 February 2016 and 9 March 2016. One amendment was made to minute 21.9 from the meeting of 3 February 2016, final bullet point, to reflect the fact that Dr Sim and not Dr Simpson as stated had made this comment. In regard to the matter of recording Senate sub-committee proceedings, as raised by Dr Sim, it was noted that due to the variety of rooms used, recording meetings of this nature in a way that effectively enables all members contributions to be recorded would require financial investment

in terms of IT infrastructure and a marked increase in the staff time needed for set up, recording and decommissioning. Professor Anderson raised matters with regard to the accuracy of minute 23.2 which was amended. With regard to 23.7 the Principal agreed to check the recording of the meeting and to circulate electronically a revised minute should that be necessary. The Principal invited members to vote on the minutes of 3 February as amended and 9 March. The votes were recorded as follows:

Yes, in favour of the motion presented:	48
No, not in favour of the motion presented:	0
Senators abstaining from voting:	0

- 37.5 A vote having been taken, the Principal confirmed that the minutes had been approved subject to clarification of minute 23.7 as mentioned previously.

QUESTION FOR THE PRINCIPAL

- 38.1 In advance of progressing to the items listed on the agenda, the Principal invited Professor David Anderson, who had asked to raise a question, to speak. Professor Anderson asked *'With respect to Senate's mandate of superintend the teaching and discipline of the university, can you please confirm that at the current time, and the near future there will be no disinvestment in academic staff positions in any School.'* In response to Professor Anderson's question, the Principal stated that only after the Scottish Government elections have taken place and the planned multi-year Spending Review which was expected to report in the summer would there be a clearer idea of the longer term financial position of Higher Education in Scotland.

HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELLBEING

- 39.1 The Principal spoke to the item on Health, Safety and Wellbeing saying that he had taken part in two very informative safety tours, one of the IMS and one of St Mary's. He advised Senate that there would now be regular safety tours taking place across the University. The Principal invited the Secretary to advise of any other issues of health and safety that had arisen. The Secretary had no items to report. Similarly no Senators had issues to report.

UPDATE ON COLLECTIVE AGREEMENT

- 40.1 Professor Kilburn, Senior Vice-Principal, provided an oral update on the Collective Agreement. He reminded members that the University had concluded a Collective Agreement with all the recognised campus trade unions agreeing changes to Terms and Conditions of employment and that staff had been notified of this in March. He advised that a motion from Dr Mills, signed by a number of Senators, had been received by the Senate Business Committee concerning the Collective Agreement reflecting unhappiness and concern about the appropriateness of the intellectual property rights and confidentiality clauses. He advised that Senate Business Committee had debated whether the motion should come to Senate but concluded that the proper route for it would be to go back to the PNCC for reconsideration in negotiation with campus trade unions. Dr Mills agreed to withdraw the motion on that basis but reserved the right to bring it back to a future Senate. In the meantime, it was also agreed to provide an update to Senate at the May meeting regarding steps taken to address the issues raised. He advised that a meeting had been held with JNCC rather than PNCC (given this was largely a matter for UCU) and that a Working Group

had been established to look at firstly developing a proper policy for intellectual property and secondly, having agreed that policy, to review the relevant clauses in the terms and conditions to identify if amendments are required.

- 40.2 Dr Mills clarified that he had agreed at Senate Business Committee that this matter could be delayed until the June Senate. He explained that the motion was initially intended to result in the revocation of the clauses in the terms and conditions until a decision could be made by Senate. He pointed out that the University's existing policy on IP had not been updated in the last 20 years and many aspects of it were therefore out of date and out of line with current legislation. Dr Mills went on to say that he had researched the IP policies of other universities and that generally these are long and highly complex legal documents. Dr Mills pointed out that whilst there are many day-to-day issues related to IP that could be handled simply, many of the legal aspects will take time to research. He noted that the first meeting of the Working Group was scheduled and would cover intellectual property rights for scholarly materials, teaching materials and a comparison of issues regarding confidentiality.
- 40.3 Professor Duff, School of Law, commented that more staff should be able to contribute to such discussions, saying that he had been disappointed to see that the meeting to discuss the terms and conditions had been for Union members only, yet many members of staff do not belong to the Union. He added that many similar negotiations take place only between the Union and the University and that other staff are not involved. He would like to see a change to this particular practice.
- 40.4 Dr Mills agreed with Professor Duff, saying that particularly discussions that revolved around every day activities should involve all staff and added that Senate should see drafts of such documents before any negotiations with the Unions. He added that terms and conditions were entirely appropriate for JNCC or PNCC, the Unions and the Court but that the views of staff and of Senate were essential also.
- 40.5 The Principal agreed with the comments made by Professor Duff and Dr Mills and said that the University did need to think about the procedure for engagement in issues such as this.
- 40.6 Dr Jeff Oliver, Geosciences, thanked Dr Mills for the incredible amount of work he had put into the motion and taking it forward for amendment of the terms and conditions. Dr Oliver added that he had concerns that private sector companies might be put off collaborating with the University should the University retain its current IP and copyright policy. Mrs Lindsey Tibbets added to these concerns saying that the Business School also had concerns in relation to the University's relationship with external funders.
- 40.7 Mrs Tibbets, Business School, raised an addition issue which was that very few of her constituents who had emailed HR about the terms and conditions had received a response. The Principal said that he was surprised to hear that staff had had no response from HR and that he would follow up on this.
- 40.8 Professor Black, School of Medicine, Medical Sciences and Nutrition, stated that the issues regarding the terms and conditions would be discussed in her School's next meeting.
- 40.9 Professor Margaret Ross, Vice-Principal (People), advised Senators that FAQs were available on StaffNet and that some of the questions asked by staff might be answered in that way.

- 40.10 The Principal then thanked Senators and advised that work would continue to address this matter.
- 40.11 The University Secretary summed up the discussion. She advised that the Senior Vice-Principal had advised members on steps being taken to address the concerns raised at the Senate Business Committee regarding the recent Collective Agreement and specifically the contractual clauses relating to Intellectual Property Rights and Confidentiality. He advised members that a Working Group had been established by JNCC to take forward the review of these clauses as a matter of urgency and would also develop a new policy on intellectual property rights. Dr Mills acknowledged that the IPR policy was in need of updating and confirmed he had withdrawn his motion pending the outcome of the Working Group. Professor Duff welcomed the approach being undertaken and advised that many staff were not in the trade union and that this factor ought to be taken into account in progressing this matter. Dr Mills endorsed Professor Duff's statement and Dr Oliver offered his thanks to Dr Mills for the work he had undertaken on this matter. Dr Tibbetts advised that members of staff had responded to the general email on this matter but had not received. The Principal confirmed that this matter would be addressed. Professor Black commented that the matter was being raised in the context of School meetings and feedback would be provided to aid the process. Finally, Professor Ross advised Senate that an informative set of questions and answers were now available on the internet.
- 40.11 Following the University Secretary's summary, Dr Mills asked whether the Working Group should report to Senate on an ongoing basis. The Principal responded to say that an update should be presented to the next Senate in June and that a view could then be made by Senate as to what progress has been made.

REPORT FROM THE UNIVERSITY COURT

- 41.1 Professor Norman Hutchison, Senate Assessor, spoke to the Report from the University Court (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) and stated that the Report would be a standing item on the agenda of Senate following each Court meeting following the recent Senate Effectiveness Review. He advised that he was happy to engage Senators in questions. He invited any questions from the floor.
- 41.2 Mr Scott Styles, School of Law, raised a question in relation to item 5.3 asking for clarity regarding the requirement for surplus and how it related to national pay bargaining. The Principal explained that the discussion of Court was whether or not Scotland had a different pay bargaining system to the rest of the UK and whether there might be a need to think again about national pay bargaining. He stressed that Court had taken no view on the matter.
- 41.3 Professor Peter Duff, School of Law, raised a question in relation to item 3.3 referring to the meeting on 21 April to make a decision on the Korean campus. Professor Duff asked for an update on progress. The Principal responded to say that the paper to Operating Board had recommended that the University had been unable to get the legally binding guarantees that it had requested due to changes from Korea. Nonetheless, further negotiation had taken place with the partner and as a result of this, even though the University had still not received the legally binding guarantees it required, the Operating Board had made the decision to continue negotiations as some further documentation had been received.
- 41.4 Mr Scott Styles, School of Law, raised a question relating to item 4.1 regarding Higher Education Governance (Scotland) Act and the report received from the Working Group

on the future composition of Court. He queried whether this report was available and asked about the composition of this Group and whether Senate would have an opportunity to comment on this report. The Principal responded that the Working Group is a working group of Court and includes representatives of independent members, senate assessors, the Student Association President and elected members of the Business Committee. He advised that the Working Group had brought forward a discussion paper which suggested how the recommendations of the Higher Education Review could be taken into account and a number of principles that might be brought forward. They proposed a reduction in the size of Court. He noted that there had been a good discussion at Court regarding the implications of this on the composition of Court and what would be best for this University. A final paper was being put to a meeting on 10 May 2016. He advised that, while a decision for Court, once clear position on Court's preferred way forward was available it would be appropriate to take the views of Senate through a discussion.

- 41.5 The Principal then thanked Senators and invited the University Secretary to summarise the discussion. She noted that Professor Hutchison updated Senators on the meeting of the University Court held on 22 March 2016. Mr Styles raised a query around paragraph 5.3 of the Senate Assessor's Report as it related to the University's consideration of national pay bargaining. The Principal clarified this matter had been discussed briefly at Court following it being raised by a Court member. Professor Duff raised a query regarding paragraph 3.3 of the Report and sought clarification of the position with regard to the proposed Korean Campus. The Principal advised that due to lack of legally binding agreements at the time of the Operating Board no final decision had been made other than to continue to progress the necessary agreements. Finally, Mr Styles raised under paragraph 4.1 of the Report an issue relating to the future composition of the Court. The Principal clarified that a Working Group of Court comprising independent members, members from the Business Committee, Students' Association and Senate Assessors had considered the HE Governance Bill and developed a proposal to reduce the size of Court. The Working Group will meet again on 10 May and consider a further draft of proposals. The Principal clarified this is would be a decision for Court and views of Senate would be sought through a discussion at Senate.

PRESENTATION ON KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

- 42.1 Ms Anne Buckle, Head of Strategic Planning, gave a presentation on Key Performance Indicators, the Strategic Plan Consultative Process and the future plans for strategic and operational planning within the University. The presentation is made available for members on the Senate website. Following the presentation, Ms Buckle invited questions.
- 42.2 Dr Jeff Oliver, Geosciences, thanked Ms Buckle for her presentation and asked her to explain the nature of the consultation on the Strategic Plan. Ms Buckle responded to say that in October and November 2014 there were a series of workshops and to which a broad range of staff were invited. There were then ten open meetings with the Principal to which all staff were invited. The workshops led to the development of the University's White Paper, which was published to all staff and students for comment and feedback and which was the basis of the finalised Strategic Plan. The ten open meetings led to the development of the FAQs. Dr Oliver asked whether the presentation and the Committee of University Chairs (CUC) guide and the associated evaluation document could be distributed to Senators and it was agreed that this could be done.

- 42.3 Professor David Anderson, Social Sciences, asked a question relating to the data and targets. He questioned why HESA data were used as the basis for internal planning and targets when HESA data were for the purposes of external reporting and inaccurate because of the 1-year time-lag from producing the data to it being published by HESA. Ms Buckle explained that not all targets were based on external data such as HESA and added that HESA is anyway in the process of changing the way it uses and records its data so that there will be less of a lag in future. Ms Buckle also explained that HESA data were used only as a starting point and that various aspects, such as the impact of voluntary severance, had been taken into account.
- 42.4 Dr John Lamb, Business School, asked how Planning had identified and accounted for economy of scope. The Principal stated that economy of scope was where the combination of factors might hide a niche subject area, for example, and therefore result in targets that were too generic. The Principal pointed out, however, that the aim of the University was not to be a niche University and that to take account of economies of scope was therefore not appropriate in developing the University's Strategic Plan.
- 42.5 Professor Kashtalyan, School of Engineering, commented on the sector shift from student satisfaction to student engagement and asked whether the University's plans would recognise that shift. Ms Buckle responded that whilst at the moment the University was using the National Student Survey, it was about to move to the UK Engagement Survey so that going forward the target would be reviewed to reflect an engagement rather than satisfaction approach. The Principal added that the University would need to look to England and the Teaching Excellence Framework and how that might shape the University's future targets.
- 42.6 Ms Slater, School of Law, asked when the next stage of the University's planning cycle would be rolled out. Ms Buckle responded to say that the next stage would start rolling out in June. A report on the process would go to Court at the end of May, after which a planning template would be sent out to Schools for completion. The returns would be reviewed in September and finalised in November. Ms Buckle confirmed that the University would be working 2 years ahead from now on, so the template sent out in June will be for the plans for academic year 2017/2018.
- 42.7 The Principal then thanked Senators and invited the University Secretary to summarise the discussion. She noted that the Senate received a presentation from Miss Anne Buckle, Head of Strategic Planning, on the University's Key Performance Indicators following which she received a number of questions from Senators on the details of the presentation.

AMENDMENTS TO SENATE STANDING ORDERS

- 43.1 The University Secretary spoke to the paper on the Amendments to Senate Standing Orders (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes) arising from the recent Senate Effectiveness Review and summarised the main proposed changes as follows:
- The addition of the role of the Senate Business Committee in setting the Senate agenda and agreeing whether matters are for discussion and approval or discussion to provide an academic view [Standing Order 4];
 - The timelines for submission of papers and the way in which they should be presented [Standing Orders 3, 5 & 6];
 - The audio-recording of meetings [Standing Order 9];
 - The introduction of an informal Q & A session [Standing Order 12];

- The requirement for a vote on matters for approval [Standing Order 13];
- The role of the University Secretary in providing a summary of the outcome at the end of the discussion of each agenda item [Standing Order 14];
- Update to replace 'show of hands' with 'vote' [Standing Order 24].

43.2 Mr Scott Styles, School of Law, raised an issue regarding Standing Order 5, asking whether the seven days was calendar or working days. He suggested calendar days should be sufficient. He then noted that there was no provision for the scheduling of the date of the Senate Business Committee meetings and proposed that it should be held 14 calendar days before the next scheduled meeting of the Senate to allow time for the ten working days for circulation of papers to be met. He also proposed that an amendment should be made to Standing Order 3 proposing that where an item has been submitted less than ten working days but is enruled insufficiently urgent to merit the waiving of rule that decision shall be reported to Senate and recorded in the minutes. Dr Mills suggested that 14 working days would be more appropriate to enable time for preparation of the final Senate papers in time for their circulating by the prescribed ten working day deadline. Following further discussion, it was proposed this be 'at least 14 working days'.

43.2 Mr Liam Fuller, AUSA Education President, suggested that the term 'Chairman' be changed to 'Chairperson'. Mr Styles suggested it should be changed to Convener.

43.3 The Principal then thanked Senators and invited the University Secretary to summarise the discussion. She noted that following a discussion of the proposed changes to the Senate Standing Orders which were made following the recent Senate Effectiveness Review, the Principal invited members to vote on the amendments as detailed in Annex A to the paper as amended in discussion at Senate by Mr Styles and the amendment of the term Chairperson to Convener. She advised she would liaise with Mr Styles to agree the detailed wording.

43.4 The Principal then asked Senate whether they approved the proposed amendments subject to the proposed changes and agreement by the University Secretary and Mr Styles of the final wording, the results of which were as follows:.

Yes, in favour of the motion presented:	59
No, not in favour of the motion presented:	1
Senators abstaining from voting:	0

ACADEMIC LINE MANAGEMENT

44.1 Professor Margaret Ross, Vice-Principal (People) presented an Update on the implementation of Academic Line Management (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). She reported that implementation had rolled out across all Schools with significant numbers of staff now holding responsibility for Academic Line Management. All line managers had undertaken obligatory initial training and the Heads of School were now considering further topics to be included as optional training for line-managers to supplement the mandatory training provided.

44.2 Professor David Anderson, School of Social Sciences, thanked Professor Ross and said that it was good to see engagement across the University; he noted however that implementation appeared to be an uneven process with the system being managed very differently in different Schools. Professor Anderson suggested that the whole process could have been rolled out much more smoothly and consistently had there

been better dialogue initially. Professor Anderson suggested that there were naturally occurring organic means of management that developed within Schools and disciplines and that these should have been taken account of rather forcing a hierarchical vertical system of line management. He also asked whether the 1:15 manager : staff ratio had actually come into being as he thought that was probably not the case and he suggested that the policy should not have been so specific in this regard. He suggested that discipline groupings should be recognised as the natural of area of line-management and added that in areas where Disciplines were not used as the boundary for line-management some people had as many as three line managers, which did not work.

- 44.3 Professor Ross responded to thank Professor Anderson for his comments and questions and said that there were indeed differences in the ways Schools operated the system, adding that this had been decided in discussions between the Heads of School and the Working Party up to a year ago. She pointed out that the job description for Academic Line Manager was generic and to be customised so that it reflected local arrangements. She added that disciplines were not necessarily the natural boundaries for line-management; some Schools had decided that disciplines would provide the framework for Academic Line Management, others had not and discussions had taken place between Heads of School and HR to make decisions in that regard. Professor Ross suggested that staff should discuss the process within their School with their Head of School and that issues could be raised either at School level or as part of the ongoing Employee Engagement meetings.
- 44.4 Professor David Anderson, Social Sciences, stated that the Update did not address the issues raised in response to the original paper on Academic Line Management and that a revised Update, which addressed all of the three issues raised, should be presented to the next Senate. Professor Ross responded to say that she considered that those issues had been addressed in the last discussion but that these issues could be reported on in greater detail at a future Senate if there was an appetite for that.
- 44.4 Dr Menshykov, School of Engineering, noted an issue of discrepancy in the numbers in the report between the data provided in pages 2 and 7 of the report. Professor Ross said she would check on the accuracy and consistency of the numbers.
- 44.5 The Principal then asked Senate to vote on whether members would like a revised update to be brought back to Senate.

Yes, in favour of the motion presented:	20
No, not in favour of the motion presented:	27
Senators abstaining from voting:	3

- 44.6 The Principal then thanked Senators and invited the University Secretary to summarise the discussion. She noted that Professor Ross provided Senators with an update on the progress made in implementation of the School and Academic Line Management structure following which she responded to a number of queries from Senators. Specifically, Professor Anderson sought to have the paper resubmitted to take account of concerns outlined in the original motion. Professor Ross agreed to continue to report to Senate on the development of this and also at other fora such as School meetings and through the University's Staff Engagement Strategy. The Principal invited Senators to vote on whether a revised paper should be brought back to the next Senate. A vote having been taken, it was agreed that a paper would not be resubmitted to the next Senate.

INSTITUTIONAL RETENTION TASK FORCE

- 45.1 Professor McGeorge, Vice-Principal (Learning & Teaching) presented an update on the Institutional Retention Task Force (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). Professor McGeorge said that the purpose of the paper was to report to Senate on the progress that had been made by the Task Force which includes members from all Schools. He stressed that this paper was provided to seek input from Senators. In this regard, Professor McGeorge stated that the Task Force would particularly welcome views on section 5, fifth bullet point regarding promoting awareness of at risk attributes. He advised that analysis of data would enable the University to utilise this information to help predict those students who might benefit from additional targeted support. The Principal noted that relative to entrance requirements, the University's drop out rates were higher than others.
- 45.2 Dr Mills, School of Social Sciences, commented that there had been discussion regarding this at the Senior Personal Tutors meeting and that concerns had been raised that flagging a student as at risk might not be appreciated by students. He was content of its use for strategic purposes but was concerned about its use in identifying individual students.
- 45.3 Professor Hannaford proposed it would be helpful to ask the students their views. He expressed the view that so long as this is done carefully and supportively it would be appropriate.
- 45.3 Mr Fuller, AUSA Education President, agreed that students needed to be supported but that some students may find it difficult to be labelled in that way but if done sympathetically there should be few problems. He stressed that Aberdeen is considered as being a supportive institution. Ms Genna Clarke, AUSA Student President, said that as long as the message was managed carefully it should be alright as it is good to have support for students.
- 45.4 Dr Oliver, School of Geosciences, said that some information might be private and it was not appropriate for students to be identified by that. Professor Wells, School of Natural and Computing Sciences, pointed out that the University already collected vast amounts of information on students that was not private or personal and that the University should be able to act on this to engage with students, which is exactly what institutions with better retention rates are doing.
- 45.5 Professor Morrison, School of Divinity, History and Philosophy, said that the University should do everything it could to support students. The University has the information it needs in order to do that but is not using it. Professor Morrison pointed out that US institutions routinely contact students in an upfront manner about the information they hold on the students and are very transparent in explaining how they can support students in the particular category into which the student falls.
- 45.6 Professor McGeorge commented that whilst it was obviously important that the University considered carefully about managing the message that is put across, it was important to use the information to support students. He cited the example whereby many students do not disclose caring responsibilities on their UCAS forms yet do so once they are at University after realising how it will benefit them.
- 45.7 Professor Hutchison, Business School, commented that he thought it would be useful to have an update on the effect on the Personal Tutor system. He commented that students were not engaging with their Personal Tutors. Professor Hutchison contrasted this with the previous Adviser of Studies system saying that students had to meet their

Advisers at the beginning of the year and that started the engagement with the students; he added the same did not occur with the Personal Tutor system. He asked Professor McGeorge if there was a record of the percentage of students who turned up to their Personal Tutor meetings. Professor McGeorge responded to say that attendance varied widely and that it had been similar with Adviser meetings. He added that even though students met their Advisers briefly at the beginning of the year to discuss their courses, students did not follow up on this through further meetings or engagement. Professor McGeorge added there had been an improvement in retention figures over the past year and that whilst that could not be linked directly to the Personal Tutor system it indicated that the Personal Tutor system had not had a detrimental effect.

- 45.8 Dr North, School of Geosciences, commented that Advisers used to receive a report on 'at risk' students which forced an engagement and asked what happened in place of that now that Advisers did not exist. Professor McGeorge agreed that the University needed to use data such as missed assignments or tutorials, which were known to be indicators that a student might be struggling, and providing this to Schools and Personal Tutors for follow up.
- 45.9 Professor McGeorge agreed with the comment made by Professor Morrison, pointing out that the University needs to be far more proactive which is why there was a Task Force currently looking at ways to engage students. He pointed out that once a student had decided to leave and had completed a withdrawal form it was probably too late to engage. The Task Force had made a suggestion that the withdrawal form should be changed in title to 'suspension of studies', which gave the student the impression that there was the option to engage and return after the decision to complete the form had been made.
- 45.10 Dr Oliver, School of Social Sciences said that he agreed with Dr North, saying that the University needed return to the Advising system because the Personal Tutor system did not work. Dr Oliver added that it was not at all possible to deal with students who were not within one's own discipline as you did not know them. Professor McGeorge pointed out that through the Senior Tutors Forum, Schools had been asked to determine their own framework for the Personal Tutor system with some deciding to assign students who are within the same discipline as the Personal Tutor and others deciding not to do that. Professor McGeorge summarised the ongoing difficulties face by the Task Force which is that the fact is that those students who need most help are those who are least likely to engage with any system, whether that be Advising or Personal Tutoring.
- 45.11 Mr Styles, School of Law, noted a radical disengagement by students with the personal tutoring system. He expressed a view that the non-mandatory nature of the system did not help and that a mandatory advising system would be more appropriate. He further noted that previously students could not withdraw without seeing their Adviser. Professor McGeorge responded noting that many students withdraw without informing the University. He further acknowledged the helpful points being made and encouraged colleagues to feed these in via their Senior Tutors to inform the discussions at the Senior Tutors Forum.
- 45.12 Mr Scott Styles, Law, raised an issue regarding the data protection and that this created problems if one wanted to contact students who had fallen out of contact. He said that it would be useful to contact parents and suggested that the University should have a permission form that students could sign to permit the University to contact their parents should there be an issue. Genna Clarke, AUSA Student President, pointed out that the students who were most at risk would not sign a permission form. She added

that although the Personal Tutor system may be flawed it was continuing to be developed and was a more useful system than the Advising system as Advising had been academic and had not included pastoral support or the development of a relationship with the student, which the Personal Tutor system did.

- 45.10 Professor Philip Hannaford, Vice-Principal (Digital Strategy) said that the University needed to be very open about the data it collected and how it used the data so that students could see what data were being collected, why, and how the University would use it. Professor Hannaford said that as long as the University was collecting and using the data in all good faith and for good purpose then it should do so. He drew a comparison with the National Health Service where such data are collected about categories of patients who may be subject to particular health risks and used openly with patients to discuss what risk groups they fall into and how that risk might be managed.
- 45.11 Dr Martin Mills, School of Social Sciences, suggested that Senators had been discussing two different things, namely personal information that the University might find out about through various means and generic data about categories of students. Dr Mills added that he was concerned about the University using generic data as it was in effect using normalised statistical data to make assumptions about individuals. He thought it appropriate to use such for strategic purposes only. In response, Professor Hannaford pointed out that exactly the same type of data are used in that way for health screening, it being no different to the way in which the University intends to use data on 'at risk' categories of students. Dr Mills accepted Professor Hannaford's argument, conceding that the comparison held.
- 45.12 Ms Lindsey Tibbets, Business, commented that she was surprised to see the paper stated there were no resource implications. She added that Personal Tutoring required extensive resource in order to do it well, especially with the change to the academic year and the shorter teaching time, and that the amount of time left made engagement with students very difficult. Ms Genna Clarke, AUSA Student President, said that she had not had a Personal Tutor but pointed out that Adviser meetings had always been very rushed with no time to discuss anything other than ones courses. Students had to queue for a long time and advising meetings did not result in pastoral support or building of a relationship. Professor McGeorge said that adding in or taking away a week from the term time really did not make any significant difference to whether Advisers or Personal Tutors could build a relationship with their students. He pointed out that the relationship had to begin before a student arrived and the University needed to consider how this could be done and agreed that this did have resource implications.
- 45.13 The Principal then asked if Senate to vote on whether it agreed with the initiatives (other than the Retention best practice swap shop which had taken place) proposed by the Institutional Retention Task Force, the results of which were as follows:

(i) Data Collection and Analysis

Yes, in favour of the motion presented:	40
No, not in favour of the motion presented:	3
Senators abstaining from voting:	2

(ii) Review of Withdrawal Process

Yes, in favour of the motion presented:	51
No, not in favour of the motion presented:	1
Senators abstaining from voting:	2

(iii) Communication Blitz

Yes, in favour of the motion presented:	45
No, not in favour of the motion presented:	2
Senators abstaining from voting:	5

(iv) Promoting awareness of at risk attributes

Yes, in favour of the motion presented:	39
No, not in favour of the motion presented:	6
Senators abstaining from voting:	6

44.14 The Principal then thanked Senators noting that the other initiatives in the paper had taken place.

IMPLICATIONS OF SFC FUNDING

46.1 The Senior Vice-Principal presented the paper on the Implications of SFC Funding (copy filed with the principal copy of the minutes). He highlighted the main points of the paper as being: an overall funding cut of 3.3% across the sector; for the University there would be a reduction of 3.9% made up of reduction to teaching and research funding. The reduction in research funding includes both a decrease in REF funding and a substantial cut in the Innovation fund and associated Knowledge Transfer funding. He advised that the cuts imposed exceeded the cap put on by SFC which was why transitional funding was in place to balance. There was an overall reduction of £2.7M which taken with increased costs in salaries and pensions would mean a challenging year ahead. Agreement had been reached with Court to reduce the surplus target to £2M to help mitigate this. He invited questions from Senate. No questions were raised.

ANY OTHER ITEMS FOR DISCUSSION

47.1 The Principal invited Senate to raise any other items for discussion. There were no issues raised.

SENATE WORKING GROUPS ON KPIS

48.1 The Senate approved, following a vote, the remit and composition of the Senate Working Group on Key Performance Indicators which was agreed by Senate at its meeting on 3 February 2016. The outcome of the vote was as follows:

Yes, in favour of the motion presented:	44
No, not in favour of the motion presented:	4
Senators abstaining from voting:	2

**ELECTION OF ELECTED MEMBERS TO THE
SENATE BUSINESS COMMITTEE**

- 49.1 The Senate noted that following recent elections, Professor Karin Friedrich, Dr Donna MacCallum, Dr Martin Mills, Dr David Lusseau, Dr John Lamb, Dr Murilo Da Silva Baptista and Professor Maria Kashtalyan had been elected to serve on the Senate Business Committee until 30 September 2018.

**ELECTION OF NON *EX-OFFICIO* MEMBERS TO THE SENATUS ACADEMICUS AND
ELECTION OF SENATE ASSESSORS TO THE UNIVERSITY COURT**

- 50.1 The Senate noted that the Senate Business Committee approved the timeline for election of non *ex officio* members to the Senate (copy filed with principal copy of minutes). In regard to this matter, it was noted that a line regarding the School of Medical Sciences had been mistakenly included.

AOCB

- 51.1 The Senate noted its congratulations to Professors Glover, Gow and Prosser on their election to become Fellows of the Royal Society.